

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached drawing includes a change to Fig. 3 and replaces the original sheet inclusive of Figs. 1-3.

FIG. 3 – insert reference letters A, B and R, plus section line IV-IV.

It is requested that new Fig. 4 be inserted to further depict the part of the tread sectioned in Fig. 3.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate therein the subject matter of dependent claim 2 which recites, *inter alia*, that at least one of the incision walls comprises at least first and second series of lines of motifs in relief, with each series of lines comprising a plurality of lines extending in substantially the same direction. The lines of the first series intersect the lines of the second series.

Claim 1 further recites that the lines of the first series "pass through" the lines of the second series to form a plurality of closed recesses therebetween.

The presently claimed invention enables a tread to be provided with incisions without disturbing the overall rigidity of the tread. Further, the coefficient of friction of the incision walls is increased substantially to inhibit relative movement between those walls and increase the locking effect of one wall against the other during low or medium stresses, even when the road is wet.

Previous claim 2 was rejected over Japan '115 in view of *Shinohara* (U.S. '310) and Japan '108, it being deemed obvious to provide the tread of Japan '115 with lines of motifs as taught by *Shinohara*. However, the motif lines of *Shinohara* do not intersect as recited in claim 2, so Japan '108 was relied upon for its disclosure, in Fig. 7, of intersecting striations 7a, 7b. It was deemed obvious to provide Japan '115 with lines of grooves that intersect, in view of the disclosures of *Shinohara* and Japan '108. However, it is submitted that it would not have been obvious to provide Japan '115 with intersecting lines of motifs which pass through one another to form closed recesses therebetween, as recited in amended claim 1. The structures disclosed by *Shinohara* and Japan '108 are intended to conduct water out of the

incisions. *Shinohara's* recesses 22 are open (not closed) to allow water to escape the incision instead of becoming trapped therein. Japan '108 discloses to provide sipe walls with open grooves (striations) 7 which conduct water out of the sipe. There is no suggestion therein of providing the presently claimed intersecting lines of relief that form closed recesses (which would, in effect, inhibit, not promote, water drainage).

Thus, it is not seen how the teachings of Japan '108 are applicable to Japan '115 or to *Shinohara*. Japan '115 does not provide the sipe walls with motifs for the purpose of providing water-draining grooves, but rather for improving breaking and driving properties without an appreciable loss in block stiffness. Thus, an artisan would not look to a patent such as Japan '108 which is trying to improve water drainage from a sipe. Furthermore, there is no motivation from Japan '108 to reshape sipe walls to form closed recesses as explained above.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 1 distinguishes patentably over the applied prior art.

Independent claim 8, directed to a lamella for forming the closed recesses in a tire tread, has been amended to recite that the first and second series of lines of motifs intersect and pass through one another. Thus, it is submitted that claim 8 distinguish patentably over the applied prior art for reasons similar to claim 1.

New dependent claim 11 recites an oblique relationship between the lines of motif, and a line perpendicular to the tread's running surface. Japan '108 discloses no such oblique relationship of the grooves 7.

A new Figure 4 is submitted to show a sectional view taken along line IV-IV in Fig. 3 in order to better show the closed recesses formed in the tire tread by the

lamella of Fig. 2. The description has been amended to describe Fig. 4, and to provide antecedent basis for language used in new claim 11, which language describes the oblique relationship between the lines 310 (or 410) with the line A, as shown clearly in original Fig. 3 (see also paragraph 026 of the description).

In light of the foregoing, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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